



AR-D-014-3

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 7, 1952

TO THE HEADS OF ALL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES:

Set out below is the text of a letter I am sending today to Representative Frank L. Chelf, Chairman of a Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on the Judiciary. In view of the considerations set out in my letter, you should respectfully decline to comply with Representative Chelf's request for the information in question, if you have received such a request.

"Dear Frank:

It has come to my attention that you have requested a number of departments and agencies in the Executive Branch to furnish the following information:

A list of all cases referred to the Department of Justice or U. S. Attorneys for either criminal or civil action by any governmental department or agency within the last six years, in which:

- a. Action was declined by the Department of Justice, including in each such case the reason or reasons assigned by said Department for such refusal to act.

OGC Has Reviewed

- 2 -

- b. Said cases were returned by the Department of Justice to the governmental Department or agency concerned for further information or investigation. In such cases, a statement of all subsequent action taken by the Department of Justice should be included.
- c. Said cases have been referred to the Department of Justice and have been pending in the Department for a period of more than one year and are not included in b. above.

In my view, it would be impractical and unwise for the departments and agencies to endeavor to comply with that request.

I want to make it clear that I have no wish to obstruct your subcommittee in any legitimate inquiry it may wish to make. If there is anything wrong in the Department of Justice, I am just as anxious as anyone else — probably more anxious than anyone else — to find out about it and correct it.

However, this request of yours is so broad and sweeping in scope that it would seriously interfere with the conduct of the Government's business if the departments and agencies should undertake to comply with it. I am advised that it would require the examination of hundreds of thousands of files, that it would take hundreds of employees away from their regular duties for an extensive period of time, and that it would cost the Government millions of dollars. All this would be done, not for the purpose of investigating specific complaints, not for the purpose of evaluating credible evidence of wrongdoing, but on the basis of a dragnet approach to examining the administration of the laws.

I do not believe such a procedure to be compatible with those provisions of the Constitution which vest the executive power in the President and impose upon him the duty to see that the laws are faithfully executed. I believe that the investigative functions of the Congress have an important place in our Constitutional system, and I believe that they can be and should be used to help reform and

- 3 -

strengthen the laws to be administered by the Executive. However, I believe just as strongly that this Congressional power should be exerted only in a fashion that is consistent with the proper discharge of the Constitutional responsibilities of the Executive Branch. I feel sure that you agree with these propositions as a general matter, and I am confident that we can agree upon their practical application with respect to the work of your subcommittee.

However, in the light of the considerations set forth above, I am advising the departments and agencies that they should not undertake to comply with this particular request.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY S. TRUMAN"

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP84R001100040027-9

UNCLASSIFIED
(SENDER WILL CIRCLE CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM)

RESTRICTED
CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO		INITIALS	DATE
1	DD/A <i>ADD/A</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>11 Mar 52</i>
2	General Counsel	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>13 Mar</i>
3			
4			

FROM		INITIALS	DATE
1	Asst. to DCI	<i>REL</i> <i>REL/dr</i>	<i>10 Mar 52</i>
2			
3			

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION | <input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACTION | <input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT REPLY | <input type="checkbox"/> RETURN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COMMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PREPARATION OF REPLY | <input type="checkbox"/> DISPATCH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONCURRENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDATION | <input type="checkbox"/> FILE |

REMARKS: *Noted in Directors Log.*

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP84R001100040027-9

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED